

# Meet the Candidates

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**Natisha  
Brooks**

Natisha "Our Miss" Brooks is from Gilmer, Texas (Home Of Sweet Potatoes). Natisha is an HBCU graduate of Prairie View A&M University of the Texas A&M System with a degree in Chemistry. She arrived in Nashville in 1989 and is a retired Home School Educator of 33 years dealing with Special Needs Students with an emphasis on Autism. She has two children - attended Trevecca University and Belmont College of Law. Outside of politics, Natisha is BEST known for her sweet potato biscuits and BEST fried chicken this side of the Mississippi River. She currently advocates for Mental Health facilities and...*WLR*



**Heidi  
Campbell**

Tennessee State Senator Heidi Campbell is a Nashville native, a mom, a former music industry executive, and was the first female mayor of the city of Oak Hill. She owns a music publishing company and worked in music licensing and as the marketing director for a record label for several years. In the Senate her focus is on bringing compassionate and data-based leadership to the legislature. Senator Campbell is the former Chair of the Davidson County Senate Caucus, and serves on the Fiscal Review, TACIR, Agriculture, Energy, and Government Operations committees, Transportation and is the state lead of the Environment...*WLR*



**Sharon  
Hurt**

Sharon Hurt is a nonprofit leader and public servant. She was elected Council Member at At-Large for Davidson County in 2015, believing Nashville must be a place where everyone can enjoy economic growth and opportunity. Sharon won re-election in 2019, as the number-one vote getter for Council in Nashville. Sharon also serves as the executive director for Street Works (SW), a non-profit that helps those affected and impacted by HIV and AIDS. With an undergraduate degree from Tennessee State University, along with a graduate degree from Belmont University, Sharon has built a reputation as a leader and advocate for residents...*WLR*



**Stephanie  
Johnson**

Stephanie has been a full-time advocate for those in her community since she was a teen. She spent much of her youth volunteering at the Nashville Downtown Library and advocating for students in her school at Hunters Lane High School through the Oasis Center and Peer Leader Program. While in those roles she was able to gain valuable advocacy experience. Once Stephanie entered college, she took on the fight of advocating for victims and survivors of human trafficking. She hosted large fundraising events and with the help of teachers and advocates, helped to successfully lobby in Virginia for the passage ...*WLR*



**Freddie O'Connell**

Freddie O'Connell grew up in Nashville and has spent the past eight years in the Metro Council. He has dedicated much of his adult life to working in city neighborhoods, including his own, Salemtown. City residents have voted him best Metro Council member six times. Freddie's passion is working on the issues that make day-to-day lives better. When the city stopped picking up recycling, Freddie got a truck and picked it up for his constituents. He is the former board chair of WeGo Public Transit. He was the President of the Salemtown Neighbors Neighborhood Association and the Board President for... *WLR*



**Matthew Wiltshire**

Matt Wiltshire is an affordable housing leader who most recently served as Chief Strategy Officer at MDHA. During his time as an executive with Nashville's affordable housing agency he developed affordable housing through public-private partnerships. Prior to joining MDHA, Wiltshire served as director of economic and community development for 8 years under 3 different mayors. He began this role under Mayor Karl Dean after the great recession when the unemployment rate was over 8%. During his tenure, Nashville added 42,000 jobs, the city developed incentives for small businesses investing in diverse neighborhoods, and the unemployment rate dropped to 2%. Before ... *WLR*



**Jeff Yarbro**

Sen. Jeff Yarbro has served in the Tennessee State Senate since 2014. Elected by his Senate colleagues, Yarbro served as Minority Leader, a position he held from 2014 until 2022. His legislation on behalf of Tennesseans has focused on a wide range of issues including affordable housing, public transportation, health care access, public safety, open data and election reform. A Dyersburg native, Yarbro attended Harvard University, graduating with honors, before earning his law degree at the University of Virginia. Jeff was then an attorney with Bass, Berry & Sims before stepping down to run for Mayor. Jeff and his wife... *WLR*

*\*Candidates Jim Gingrich and Vivian Wilhoite did not provide a headshot or short biography.*

*\*\*Candidates Alice Rolli, Berne Cox, and Fran Bush, did not accept NOAH's invitation for the public meeting.*

**--- Candidate Answers to Task Force Questions ---**

**Affordable Housing**

**Q1) The Mayor's Housing Task Force recommends the establishment of dedicated funding to create a minimum of \$30 million/year for the Barnes Housing Trust Fund. NOAH has fought to see this recommendation through. What will you do in your first year to secure dedicated funding streams that provide at least \$30 million for the Barnes fund?**

**Q2) At meetings about the East Bank, residents have insisted on truly affordable housing as a priority. When they hear about the rents planned for affordable housing projects, they ask "affordable for who? Not me." Many of the workers needed for future East Bank businesses will not be able to afford to live in Nashville. How will you ensure that 50% of the housing built on Metro Owned land will be affordable to people with incomes from \$26,440- \$56,580?**

<p><b>Natisha Brooks</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> Voters must vote for a mayor that has a good relationship with the “Super Majority” to get the necessary funding for the Barnes Fund. Besides the Barnes Fund, there is other funding such as “TIF” that as Mayor would like to ensure there is full funding for this fund to support the Special Needs and the Disabled Citizens.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> As Mayor, working with corporations who want to be in Nashville will be the first step in making sure they leave their donations for Income Based affordable housing for our Nashville Residents. It will be very clear that if you want to be in Nashville - want an incentive, you will help with a percentage of income based units for our teachers/police officers and first responders, seniors, disabled and Special needs’ individuals.</p>
<p><b>Heidi Campbell</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> The state has attempted to tie our hands through preemption laws, which prohibit many traditional solutions to our affordable housing shortage. However, the Barnes Fund has proven incredibly successful in creating new housing and working within the confines of existing regulations. It is one of the best resources we have to address Nashville’s affordability crisis. One of the primary ways I will fund it is by creating and expanding public-private partnerships.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> It is in businesses’ best interest to ensure that their employees can afford to live in Nashville. Phase 1 of the East Bank plan established benchmarks for developing affordable housing on metro-owned land that would result in 20% of housing units being affordable for those making between 61%-80% of AMI and 40% for those making 60% or less, with affordable housing being defined as costing no more than 30% of income. For future phases of development, my administration will work to put in place a similar set of tiered benchmarks, but will seek to go further by requiring at least 20% of housing units built will be affordable for those making 40% or less of AMI.</p>
<p><b>Jim Gingrich</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> The Barnes fund is an important vehicle in catalyzing the non-profit community, and does need consistent, adequate funding. However, the magnitude of the challenge means that the city will require significantly greater capital to be deployed by the private sector. As mayor, we will ensure that Nashville partners with the private sector to dramatically increase the affordable housing stock being constructed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramatically streamline the approval, permitting, and inspection timelines</li> <li>• Reform our zoning laws to facilitate additional density</li> <li>• Make use of city and MDHA land</li> <li>• Explore funding that would provide lower cost equity and debt capital to those constructing or preserving affordable housing</li> </ul> <p><b>A2)</b> Nashville ranks among the top 20 most expensive rental markets in the U.S. Put another way, a starting teacher might have to spend nearly half of what they earn on rent. We need a mayor to address the problem, not just study it. I will do 3 things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to incentivize private developers to build affordable rental housing, not luxury housing.</li> <li>• Reduce barriers to affordable housing, such as zoning that inhibits multi-family homes, micro-units, and accessory dwelling units.</li> <li>• Use the city’s land holdings, much of which is ripe for affordable housing.</li> <li>• Also, the state... <i>WLR</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharon Hurt</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> We can pull funding for affordable housing from two sources. The first source is all the corporations that have moved into Nashville in the past years. Nashville gives so much to these corporations and they should give back Nashville through PILOTs and CBAs that fund affordable housing. The second is federal sources like the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. As the CEO of JUMP, I received funding from this federal program to provide</p>

	<p>dozens of affordable housing units for families. We can help nonprofits apply to programs like this to get the affordable housing we need.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> We can provide incentives to developers and nonprofits to build truly affordable units. We can't require a certain percent of the units in a building to be affordable, because the state banned that. But, we can get affordable housing units to be closer in returns to market-rate housing. My plan is to streamline the affordable housing permits process and provide tax credits so developers and nonprofits want to build affordable housing.</p>
<b>Stephanie Johnson</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> Social impact bonds, community benefits agreements (CBA), community development agreements (CDA), community development financial institutions, Greater Nashville Regional Council, and impact investing are all ways we can diversify funding our Barnes Housing Trust Fund. The Turner Impact Capital, which focuses on NOAH, is positioned to invest \$5 Billion into ensuring housing is affordable. The resources are out there, we need to ensure we create a strategic plan that speaks to our funding goals and outlines the sources we will be obtaining money from and update and expand each year if we need to.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> When talking about metro land, I believe the owners should be the community. 75% of our affordable housing stock in the country is owned by community members, not being subsidized by the government. This tells me the majority of Americans believe in affordable housing and can be trusted to ensure it is maintained.</p>
<b>Freddie O'Connell</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> It's important to be clear that there are few truly dedicated funding streams we can direct toward Barnes, and worse, the state has imposed new constraints on using surplus funds from the convention center to go to Barnes. But I'm proud to have been part of a coalition on Council that ensured we have had three straight fiscal years of \$30m commitments to Barnes, which was the core recommendation of the task force. I'm eager to see the recommendations of the unified study being completed by the housing division at Planning but will be a strong supporter of Barnes funding.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> As one of few candidates who opposed the stadium deal, I'm also one of few that has spoken repeatedly about the need to ensure that those who work at the new stadium should be able to afford to live in one of the new neighborhoods we expect to build on public land. Metro is the master developer for the stadium footprint. If I'm elected, I will ensure that the ambitious targets outlined in the East Bank Vision plan are a core part of the master development RFP and implementation.</p>
<b>Vivian Wilhoite</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> I believe that the recently passed budget by Metro Council does fund the Barnes Fund up to \$30 Million. The next Mayor will be working off of the budget that was recently passed. I do believe, however, that we need to fund the Barnes fund up to \$75M and during my second year as Mayor I will put forth a budget that increases the funding towards the Barnes fund. We must make affordable housing a priority for our city. The people that work for Nashville &amp; Davidson County and in Nashville &amp; Davidson County should be able to afford to live in our city.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The people who work for our city &amp; county and who work in our city &amp; county must be able to afford to live in our city &amp; county. We must make this a priority. We are leaving our people behind when our city workers, such as teachers, firefighters, police and other metro workers have to live outside of Davidson County and commute to Nashville to work. As for the East Bank, we have to work with the developers of these apartments and ensure that there are affordable housing options among the units constructed. We cannot...<i>WLR</i></p>

<p><b>Matthew Wiltshire</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> I believe that having a strong Barnes Fund is a critical component of an overall affordable housing strategy for Nashville. I helped create the Barnes Fund when I worked in the Mayor’s Office. And then we increased the funding for the Barnes Fund as a part of Under One Roof, the ambitious affordable housing plan I helped launch in the Mayor’s Office and then moved to MDHA to implement. However, it is obvious that we must do more. I’ve pledged to increase and create sustainable, demand-based funding for the Barnes Fund out of Metro’s General Fund.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> My vision for the East Bank is that it will include a mix of incomes and be a thriving community that includes housing for folks across the income spectrum. During my time at MDHA I helped transform areas of concentrated poverty into mixed income neighborhoods. Our leverage in the east bank is the need for infrastructure to be built. As Mayor I’ll use that leverage to ensure we prioritize building truly affordable housing. And I’ll work with the private sector to find innovative ways to incentivize the development of affordable housing where metro doesn’t control the land.</p>
<p><b>Jeff Yarbro</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> I will make funding for housing a priority, and every funding source identified in the Housing Task Force report should be on the table, as well as some other funding sources not presently allowed under state law. Earlier this year, I advanced legislation to divert taxes collected from short-term rentals to funding affordable housing in Nashville. Alternatively, hotel taxes now directed to the general fund could be dedicated to housing needs. But beyond this funding, the next Mayor must focus on how to best leverage both public funds and public lands to both bring more private and public sector capital, expertise, urgency, and ambition to addressing our city’s housing crisis.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> Nashville lacks housing where people can afford to live across numerous income levels. We have inadequacies in affordable housing for lower income residents, inadequate workforce housing based on AMI ranges, and inadequate options for those that may make more than \$60,000 but still unable to afford a typical home in Nashville. The city has far more control, flexibility, and ability to operate creatively on land owned by Metro. I would leverage both public land and investment to increase funding from federal and private sector philanthropic sources to maximize how we... <i>WLR</i></p>

***Criminal Justice***

**Q1) What is your vision for independent investigations of policing to ensure public accountability, and will you commit to an alternative that maintains the work of the Community Oversight Board to provide for independent investigations?**

**Q2) What are your views of mental health emergency response models that bring trained experts to people having a mental health crisis? Would you support more mental health “inpatient” options?**

<p><b>Natisha Brooks</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> As Mayor, Will commit to having a committee that includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Two retired police officers</li> <li>2. Two State Representatives (one Republican and one Democrat)</li> <li>3 Two State Senators(one Republican and One Democrat)</li> <li>4. One representative (Mayor’s Office)</li> <li>5. One representative (First Responder - Fire Fighter)</li> <li>6. One Attorneys (Voting Record will be reviewed)</li> </ol>
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	<p>7. Two Current Council Members (One Republican/One Democrat or Independent)  8. Two Representatives from established community organizations such NOAH and Neighbor 2 Neighbor</p> <p>Once the review board has been appointed by the Mayor, the committee can establish its own bylaws to be voted and approved by the city council.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> As Mayor, Mental Health Clinics will be the top priority of the administration. Free Mental Health Clinics in every possible area of the metropolitan. Hiring more Mental Health Clinicians for the Metro Davidson Police Department will be a part of that top priority to help officers with hard situations. Finally, will advocate to the State Legislatures to reopen Mental Health facilities so that Mental Health patients aren't housed in jail cells.</p>
<p><b>Heidi Campbell</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> Like almost every city our size, many residents lack faith in the Metro Nashville Police Department. But with Nashville's growth and a recent increase in crime, the relationship between citizens and law enforcement is more important than ever. Community oversight of the police is an important aspect of public safety, and I support the future police review and advisory committee (formerly COB) continuing the current memorandum of understanding they have in place with MNPd. As Mayor I will encourage MNPd to follow it.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> As expectations for police and public services change, Nashville must retool our approach to public safety. Every 911 call must be answered, but not all require a police response. Nashville needs more alternative response professionals with expertise catering to the community and those in crisis. When situations are handled with the appropriate level of intervention, our police can focus on their primary responsibility - keeping us safe from violent crime. I support mental health in patient options, and as Mayor, I will work to increase funding and support for mental health emergency responders from federal, state, and local sources.</p>
<p><b>Jim Gingrich</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> Every public company, including AllianceBernstein, has an internal audit group that effectively reports to the board of directors, providing independent oversight. Great organizations welcome such scrutiny. Similarly, in our government, it only makes sense there is public oversight. We must work together with stakeholders, the state, MNPd, and the community to build an oversight process.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> We must support our MNPd and Nashville residents with mental health emergency responders, also known as second responders. In recent years, Albuquerque piloted a program with over 50 second responders. They provide crisis aid, welfare checks, and referrals for people in need and also offer transportation to providers of mental health, addiction, shelter, and case management services. The program is seeing significant success and Nashville must look to creative solutions like Albuquerque and combine the programs with traditional treatments like more "in patient" options if we are to address our mental health crisis.</p>
<p><b>Sharon Hurt</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> I don't need to get into the Mayor's Office in order to ensure the objectives of the COB are met, I am currently sponsoring a bill to bring back the COB as a Council Member. This bill brings back the Community Oversight Board on the municipal level to the greatest extent possible under the new state law. It preserves the original COB's subpoena power via Metro Council and its \$2.2 million budget.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> I absolutely support these models. We need professionals who are trained to handle mental health crises, and not the police, to respond to these calls. They know how to respond to people facing mental health breakdowns in ways the police do not. I absolutely</p>

	support more mental health “in patient” options. We need social services like this to get to the true root of the homelessness and public safety issues in Nashville.
<b>Stephanie Johnson</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> The mayor now has the right to appoint members to an advisory committee and according to the charter the chief of police makes decisions “with the approval of the mayor.” The mayor and chief of police should be working closely together as the mayor's responsibility is the enforcement of our laws and who is involved in enforcing them. If I want to see accountability from our MNPd, I will ask for it and ensure full cooperation from our officers. Oversight is critical for public trust and safety.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> 100% as a current grad student for Clinical Mental Health Counseling, I understand the power of mental health services.</p>
<b>Freddie O’Connell</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> As a current member of Metro Council, I’m already preparing to take the next steps to ensure we can have community-involved police accountability. Metro Legal, the mayor’s office, and Metro Council have responded quickly to the state’s actions, and I hope to be part of a successful effort before I leave Council to reconstitute the civilian oversight process consistent with new state law that preempted our original approach. The good news is that the state cannot stop Nashville from including civilian oversight in our approach to accountability, and as mayor, I am committed to ensuring we continue this work.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> I think our co-response model has already shown some success, but I’m even more excited that we are working toward responses that involve mental health response without a police response where safe and appropriate. I hope to continue and expand these programs. I need more details about “in patient” options, but I think DCSO was correct to design a behavior care center into their downtown detention facility to divert people experiencing mental health crises from being booked into jail.</p>
<b>Vivian Wilhoite</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> The people have spoken on this issue when they overwhelmingly voted to have an Oversight Board. We must listen to the people, and we must have oversight of policing in our city. As the mother of African American sons, this issue is hugely important to me. I would ask my legal department to construct a plan that requires oversight immediately. We must defend what the Nashville voters have voted for– and if that means going to court to defend our Nashville priorities, that is what we will do when I am elected Mayor.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> We absolutely need more mental health professionals responding to situations in which citizens need a mental health solution. I am for both an increase in the mental health services as well as services to address homelessness and poverty in our city. We must help our neighbors get back on their feet and I do not believe in prosecuting or punishing those who are suffering from mental health issues such as addiction or struggling with homelessness and/or poverty.</p>
<b>Matthew Wiltshire</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> I believe that public trust in public entities has eroded over the past few decades. And I believe that transparency and accountability strengthen an organization. As Mayor, it’s my expectation that the police department maintain the highest level of transparency and I will hold them accountable to that standard. I will work with community stakeholders as well as the leadership of the MNPd and the FOP to establish a COB, its authority, responsibilities, staffing and composition. I have the experience, perspective and disposition to successfully bring the parties together and hold them accountable in the establishment of a well-functioning COB.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> Partners in Care has been a big success so far. Last year, this growing program responded to more than 3,000 calls for service and diverted the vast majority of</p>

	<p>individuals – about 96% – out of the criminal justice system. Even with that level of service, this program has not yet reached every police precinct in Nashville. As Mayor, Matt will make its expansion a priority. The early results of the FD’s REACH program are promising. I believe we’re under resourcing mental healthcare. Recent initiatives at the state level are creating the opportunity to create facilities with hundreds of new beds.</p>
<b>Jeff Yarbro</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> The state legislation undermining the Community Oversight Board erodes public trust in Metro and MNP. The next Mayor’s responsibility is to promote transparency, oversight, and accountability within legal limitations. In reality, prior mayors and chiefs should have initiated a community oversight board before voters were forced to take the matter into their own hands with a referendum. Despite state interference, the need for oversight remains. The next Mayor should allocate adequate funds and staff to support community oversight and work with MNP to ensure we are embedding transparency and accountability in the city’s law enforcement culture and budgeting. Building such trust is an essential component for a modern, professional police force.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> It is far more sensible to have mental health professionals respond to mental health crises whenever feasible. Such a response makes it more likely individuals receive the help they need and less likely they will face criminal justice consequences due to a health condition. It also preserves already-taxed policing resources for more effective deployment. I’ll build on the work of Mayor Cooper to expand this initiative. We have remarkable deficits in our provision of mental health care, and I will work to increase the number of professionals operating in ...<i>WLR</i></p>

***Economic Equity & Jobs/ Transportation***

**Q1) What are the top 3 things you will get done within the first 6 months of your administration to improve public transportation and how will you pay for it without increasing sales taxes?**

**Q2) What do you consider to be a living wage in our city, knowing the skyrocketing cost of living, and how will you help Nashvillians reach a living wage?**

<b>Natisha Brooks</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> Top Three During First Six Months For Transportation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with NDOT - Fast Bus Track from Murfreesboro to Downtown and Downtown to the Airport - use the proceeds to start on light rail/ monorail around the county. Work with the legislature to receive one cent of the three cent sales tax to help start with transit.</li> <li>2. Bus Driver Pay Salary - \$30 Per hour starting pay</li> </ol> <p>More protective stops on bus routes for pedestrians safety. More Bus Routes around the COUNTY!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Soliciting traveling companies to have “pick up” /connection stops to ease congestion on the highways. No cost to Metro Government.</li> </ol> <p><b>A2)</b> Living Wage - \$18 per hour</p> <p>Take Property Sales Tax to Pre Covid Assessments and reducing Business taxes will help with the efforts of high rent and Small Business Success. Also, review parking pricing for those that work downtown. People should NOT have to PAY TO PARK TO WORK/EAT!</p>
<b>Heidi Campbell</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> Confirm the 2016 feasibility study of moving Radnor Yard still holds up and get a current estimate of the price tag; this would cost a negligible amount because it could likely be done by existing departments in the Mayor’s office, and is a vital first step toward</p>



	<p>making the most out of built-in infrastructure capacity we have in solving our transit problems. Use funding from the recently passed transportation bill to look into adding a second line of tracks to the Music City Star. Allocate transportation bill funding to study and start work on LRT from the airport to downtown.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> MIT's living wage calculator suggests a living wage for a single adult, without children, in Davidson County is \$18.35/hour; when children are added into the equation the living wage increases to \$33.71-\$54.50/hour, or roughly \$70-\$114,000 a year. All that said, Nashvillians need good jobs! Right now, key economic drivers for the Nashville region are Healthcare, Tourism &amp; Hospitality, Advanced Manufacturing, and Music &amp; Entertainment. Workforce development for students and employees to learn and build new skills, expanding their access to employment options, must be a priority.</p>
<b>Jim Gingrich</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> The problem with Metro is that our spending is up with little return. I will do what I did when I oversaw a multi-billion budget: go through the budget line by line and ensure we are spending on the priorities that matter and that taxpayers are getting what they should expect from each tax dollar, including public transit. There are several things we can do in the first 6 months:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We must address the number of pedestrian deaths in our community.</li> <li>2. Increase the frequency of buses and the number of transportation hubs.</li> <li>3. Expand the number of routes and dedicated bus lanes.</li> <li>4. Constructively engage our surrounding counties about regional solutions.</li> </ol> <p><b>A2)</b> First and foremost, it's important to look at how I pay my own team. Every Jim for Nashville team member is paid a minimum \$20/hour and as Mayor, I'll continue to advocate for fair wages. According to Nashville Living Wage, the living wage is \$15.40 with healthcare and benefits, and \$17.40 without healthcare and benefits. It is imperative that we invest in the people of Nashville to prepare them to grow their income over the course of their lifetime. That starts with investing in K-12, vocational and technical... <i>WLR</i></p>
<b>Sharon Hurt</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> The top three things I will accomplish as Mayor regarding transportation is create a plan for choice lanes on our highways, delay school start times to ease the nine-to-five traffic, and begin the bus-only lane project on Murfreesboro Pike. I plan to fund the bulk of this through federal grants and the rest through corporate partners interested in improving Nashville's infrastructure.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> I supported increasing the Metro employee minimum wage to \$15 and I believe that can be a living wage for a single individual in this city. For a family, I would say that number is closer to \$30. Children are expensive! To reach this wage, we need to create opportunities in Nashville for good, high-paying jobs. We need to tell businesses who want to come here that they need to create family-supporting jobs and we need to partner with the labor unions to channel Nashvillians to apprenticeships programs that will lead to good-paying jobs.</p>
<b>Stephanie Johnson</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> I will build off of Mayor Cooper's people-first transportation strategy. I will also create an Arts, Business, and Entertainment committee that will be tasked with working through events happening in Metro and creating transportation plans where we ask major events to work our events transportation plan into their events and marketing.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> A living wage ranges between \$18 and \$33 dollars. Research shows when governments pay their employees these wages it sets the tone for the entire city. I will ensure everyone on metro payroll is obtaining a living wage and creating a wage campaign with state and local leaders.</p>

<p><b>Freddie O'Connell</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> The good news is I already took an important step, fighting to ensure the FY24 budget the incoming mayor will inherit includes \$2.8m for enhanced crosstown routes as part of our better bus system. We also secured hundreds of thousands of dollars for adding new transit service to the new Lawson high school. In future budgets, we'll complete more of our frequent transit network, which brings transit closer to communities, extends hours and frequencies, and introduces more technology. We have all the plans we need; we just need a mayor ready and willing on day one to do the work.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The most recent publicly available data from Nashville Living Wage suggests the living wage in Nashville is \$15.40/hour with healthcare and benefits and \$17.40/hour without. But this is a survival wage, not a stability wage. The stability wage is \$32.78/hour. I've been proud to be part of a coalition on Council that has routine fought for higher wages for public employees, including support staff, who are some of the lowest paid workers in Metro. We've been successful for years, but I want the mayor's budget to be a strong starting point rather than workers relying on Council to fix it.</p>
<p><b>Vivian Wilhoite</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> The top three things that I would do in my administration to address public transportation are within six months I would 1). Convene a regional delegation of state, federal and local leaders, consisting of neighboring mayors and county officials to have a comprehensive regional discussion and plan concerning public transit. We must have a regional solution. Davidson County taxpayers alone cannot bear this cost. 2). I would engage in a city-wide public relations campaign to educate our citizens on the public transportation options that we currently have, and how they can take advantage of these options 3). Working with WeGo Public Transit and the Amalgamated Transit Union, I would look at ways to make our buses more carbon neutral and to also increase the routes that our buses take to ensure that we are reaching all parts of our city</p> <p><b>A2)</b> A living wage is not a stagnant number. That number was different yesterday from what it is today and it's different today from what it will be tomorrow. That is why as the Assessor of Property I gave pay raises to my employees. And, that is why as Mayor I support annual cost of living raises to all city workers...<i>WLR</i></p>
<p><b>Matthew Wiltshire</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> My number one transit priority is building a dedicated lane BRT between the airport and downtown. This investment is well positioned to receive significant state and federal support, making the outlay to the city well within the constraints of our capital spending capabilities. I believe this will pull traffic off of the interstate, present new options to develop affordable housing near transit stops, and help build a culture of mass transit. Additional capital spending priorities will be accelerating the completion of the City Central Greenway, and improving general road maintenance – such as patching potholes.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> Nashville has gotten far too unaffordable for working families. As our city grows we need to make sure the folks who live here are the ones who benefit from this growth. While working in the Mayor's office I helped develop a first of its kind small business incentive program which invested in small businesses which were in long neglected neighborhoods. I believe this is the kind of approach we should take in the future. As the director of the Mayor's office of ECD we lowered the unemployment rate to 2.0%, which created upward pressure on wages and increased economic opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Jeff Yarbrow</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> First, especially along our key transit corridors, we should improve the frequency, extend the hours, and guarantee the reliability of public transportation options. While I wouldn't guarantee execution within 6 months, I believe we would begin the process of prioritizing and making targeted investments in new and expanded service, cross-town routes, and community transit hubs. Second, we should prioritize improvements in pedestrian and bus stop infrastructure, especially where we face risks of pedestrian injuries</p>

	<p>or fatalities, to ensure our existing service is more safely accessible to a broader range of our citizens. In conjunction, we should harness data to strategically invest in micro transit options and infrastructure improvements to remove first &amp; last mile obstacles to those who would otherwise use public transportation. Third, there is urgency within the first six months to take actions to relaunch our longer-term transit strategy. For Transit 2.0 to be a reality, the Mayor must reinstate discussions around our city's plan and timeline for moving toward dedicated transit funding. In order to forge sufficient stakeholder consensus and community support, that work must begin immediately. Simultaneously, the Mayor must prioritize regional planning discussions with mayors and legislators across middle Tennessee, as well as our state...WLR</p>
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<b>Education</b>	
<p><b>Q1) Metro Nashville Public Schools has four Core Tenets, one of which is to identify and eliminate inequities. NOAH is especially concerned about the impact of racial inequities in our public school system. What racial inequities do you see and what will you do to address them?</b></p> <p><b>Q2) Beyond ensuring good funding, what do you think is the role of the mayor in supporting public schools?</b></p>	
<b>Natisha Brooks</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> A top priority as Mayor is to work with the State to re address the 3rd Grade Retention Law. Students learn in many different ways and many suffer from test anxiety without a proper diagnosis of it. A test that was designed and created out of state should not be the assessment given to our students. One test should not decide whether a student advances or retains in their grade level. Will work with the State and School Board to find other ways and methods to access our students for success on their current grade levels.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The role of Mayor in supporting public schools are the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Paying Teachers <u>\$70,000</u> starting Pay</li> <li>2. Substitute Teachers/ Janitors/ Para Professionals/ Cafeteria Workers Starting Pay <u>\$25</u> Per Hour</li> <li>3. NO OUT SOURCING for Janitorial Services</li> <li>4. Curriculum Directors Paid Administrative Pay - One of the most important positions in the Public School System.</li> <li>5. Mental Health Services in all schools.</li> <li>6. Not teaching to the test / meet students on their learning abilities.</li> <li>7. Bring back TRADE SCHOOL certificates.</li> </ol>
<b>Heidi Campbell</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> The effects of decades of redlining on public education cannot be adequately explained in 100 words, but the data is clear: MNPS has significant achievement and resource gaps across racial and ethnic groups. One of the most promising solutions to this crisis are community school coordinators, which work with MNPS initiatives like Community Achieves to provide career readiness, family engagement, adult development, and other social services. By turning the school building into a neighborhood hub, community school coordinators build relationships and foster success.</p>

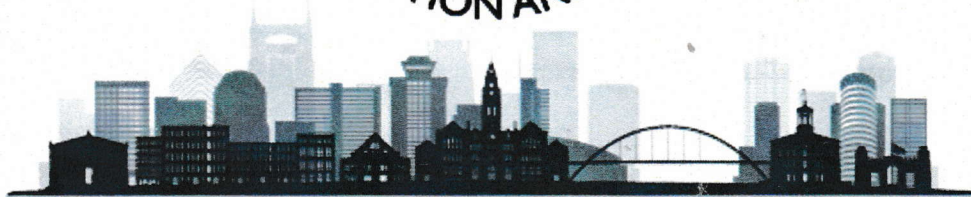
*Libraries*

	<p>I will work with MNPS to implement these positions in our priority schools and across Davidson County.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> Public schools play a central role in the future of our community. Ensuring student success and erasing racial inequities aren't just priorities, they're necessities to ensure fair and consistent growth in Nashville. Nashville's next mayor must do all they can to accomplish these goals, and this goes beyond fully funding critical positions like RTI instructors. It also means working as a venture catalyst to promote, develop, and expand MNPS's relationships with community organizations, industry leaders, job creators, and everyday Nashvillians to help our school system provide the best education it can to every single student.</p>
<b>Jim Gingrich</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> Every generation deserves the opportunity to build a better life. Unfortunately, in Nashville today, that is not the case. Nashville ranks at the bottom of large US cities in intergenerational economic mobility, meaning if you're born poor in Nashville, you're more likely to remain poor. And this significantly impacts our communities of color. As Mayor, I'll prioritize investments in our public school system as well as after school and summer programs, wrap around and support services in our communities that need them most.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The Mayor is the only individual uniquely positioned to interact with the private sector, the nonprofit community, as well as, other offices. I am committed to working with the superintendent, community, other Metro departments, and MNPS board to develop a comprehensive five-year plan to significantly improve outcomes for all of our children. The plan will integrate MNPS-based programs with after school programs, support services, and summer jobs, all of which will include the coordinated participation of other departments within Metro as well as non-profit and business partners. I will support the funding of that plan, and I will hold those... <i>WLR</i></p>
<b>Sharon Hurt</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> One thing on the top of my mind is how many of our teachers do not look like our students. I believe this impacts the quality of education they receive. There is a gap in the cultural understanding. When I was growing up, a teacher was not just a teacher but a support system. As Mayor, I will create a federal apprenticeship program that will provide a path for those without college degrees to become teachers. Because of the history around what types of people get to go to college, I believe this will help diversify our teacher pipeline.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The Mayor's primary role after funding is to make sure a child has a roof over their head and access to a social worker so our children are in a position to be able to learn. As Mayor, I will work to make sure all the other parts of a child's life are in place so they can concentrate on school. We also need to support our teachers in the same way. I will provide workforce housing and mental health resources for teachers so they can afford to live near the schools they teach and thrive mentally.</p>
<b>Stephanie Johnson</b>	<p><b>A1)</b> I plan to visit over 100 metro schools when I reach office. I want to speak with teachers, students, parents, and support staff. This time will allow us to observe the schools. I recently went to a school, and I observed some anti-social behaviors from some students. I observed more white students in the rock class and mostly the black students leaving out of one side of the school. In addition, I will have an initiative out of my office called "Adopt a School" where I encourage the community to adopt a school in their neighborhood to volunteer or donate.</p>

	<p><b>A2)</b> The role of the mayor is to be an overseer and ensure her city is taken care of. Schools are a large part of our city and I want to ensure equity and ensure students have a place that is not causing more harm to them, but is doing their sole job of educating. We are only as strong as our weakest link and as mayor I want to ensure our weakest areas turn into some of our strongest, and I will put my full support behind it.</p>
<p><b>Freddie O'Connell</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> I see what Ansley Erickson chronicled in <i>Making the Unequal Metropolis</i>. For too long, investment in education was purposefully unequal. We've begun to correct injustices of the past, but we need to do more. I've been supportive of NOAH's calls to increase SEL funding, of teacher and support staff pay increases, and of expanding the critically important Community Achieves program. As a mayor with children in our public schools, I will invite parents and families to celebrate excellence where it exists, and I will be personally accountable for where it doesn't.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The mayor should ensure that the city is as strong a partner as possible to our public schools. This means offering more high-quality pre-K seats; moving toward guaranteed after care; and offering better transit options for choice families, extracurricular options, and family involvement. And generally working to remove or lower barriers for working families to be able to choose Metro Schools. We should also push back high school start times, which are the earliest in the country. But good funding matters, too, and I plan to ensure that our teachers are always the best paid in the state of Tennessee.</p>
<p><b>Vivian Wilhoite</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> We have an economic parity problem in a lot of areas in Metro government. We see this in education too. Some parts of our city and county get funding for projects and other parts do not. Some schools have more resources in one part of the city &amp; county than schools in other parts of town. We must do better. We can begin by being intentional in making sure that there is economic parity in our city.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> The Mayor can assure funding and can also demand accountability from our elected school board and director of schools. We must have accountability as the future of our children depends on it. The Mayor can also ensure that our students are safe. The Mayor must use her voice to make student safety a priority. The Mayor can also make universal pre-K a priority for our city. This will close the gap in education among minority students and students who are learning English as a second language. The Mayor can also make sure that our city is a welcoming place for all students.</p>
<p><b>Matthew Wiltshire</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> The equity gap among college-going students in Nashville is the largest it has ever been: Black and Latinx students are far less likely to enroll in college than are their white and Asian counterparts. And high schools with the lowest college-enrollment rates serve high populations of both low-income students and students of color. As Mayor, I will start to address this by working with MNPS and community partners to expand efforts to ensure that every high-school student is guaranteed regular one-on-one meetings with a college-access professional who can help them navigate toward college completion.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> As a MNPS graduate and parent, I'll spotlight the great work happening at MNPS. Students are bringing numerous challenges with them into the classroom: trauma, homelessness, food insecurity, etc. As Mayor, I'll better align the private, public, and non-profit sectors to provide more support services to our students. When we do that our students can concentrate on learning and our teachers can focus on teaching. I'll also work to address teacher shortages by pursuing innovative solutions, like placing</p>

	<p>childcare centers inside MNPS buildings and leveraging federal assistance to help teachers that are first time home buyers with down-payment assistance.</p>
<p><b>Jeff Yarbro</b></p>	<p><b>A1)</b> Most Nashville schools draw their student bodies from nearby neighborhoods or the communities within zones drawn by MNPS. As such, our schools generally reflect (and oftentimes exacerbate) the iniquities of the city itself. The demographic patterns of the city largely persist from the Civil War era and can be traced through the time of de jure segregation, red-lining, neglected investments, and infrastructure projects that have both divided communities and hindered wealth creation. It is therefore little surprise that there are present gaps in wealth, home ownership, infrastructure, and opportunity, as well as increased likelihood of living in concentrated poverty. That means schools with fewer resources are largely tasked with educating student bodies facing more and bigger challenges. We can see these iniquities manifested in everything from teacher turnover to rates of suspension to achievement gaps to PTA budgets.</p> <p><b>A2)</b> Before thinking about MNPS itself, the Mayor has a critical role to play to address broader economic, housing, and health needs of communities that have gone unaddressed and that have not shared in Nashville's larger economic success. Housing affordability that incorporates avoiding displacement is key to preserve stable communities, reduce mobility between schools, and ensure fewer schools in areas of concentrated poverty...<i>WLR</i></p>

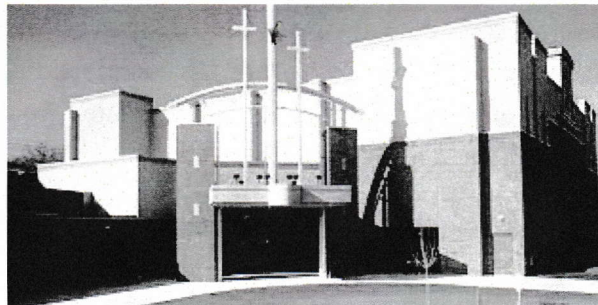
**Nashville:  
The Struggle for Equity:  
Justice or Just "IT"?**



**[NOAHTN.ORG](http://NOAHTN.ORG)**

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Sunday, July 9th, 2023  
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.



**Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church**  
1203 9th Ave N, Nashville, TN 37208

## WHAT IS NOAH?

NOAH is an anti-racist faith-based coalition that is multiracial, multigenerational, and interfaith comprised of congregations, community organizations, and labor unions that work to amplify the power of ordinary people. NOAH does not endorse political candidates but gets them to endorse our issues agenda and pledge to work with NOAH if they are elected.

- NOAH is a powerful, county-wide, social justice organization that addresses issues *determined by its members* to be impacting our communities. NOAH is *interfaith & multi-racial*, involving congregations, labor unions, and other organizations.
- NOAH *engages ordinary people* in political & economic decisions affecting their lives, uniting the faith & justice community to act on its values in the public arena.

NOAH's **four focus areas** are determined through Listening Campaigns, hundreds of one-on-one conversations within NOAH member organizations. The Task Forces research the issues and organize to influence decision-makers for specific solutions. (At the recent Issues Convention in May, Transportation was added.) Any and all are invited to attend meetings of the task forces in which they wish to participate.

1. **Affordable Housing**
2. **Criminal Justice**
3. **Economic Equity & Jobs / Transportation**
4. **Education**

## EVENT GROUND RULES FOR CANDIDATES

1. Be respectful.
2. Please keep your responses within the established time limits or our moderators will need to cut you off. Our moderators will tell you how much time you have to answer before asking the questions. Our timekeepers sitting in front of you will signal the time remaining as you speak.
3. Please, no cross-talk among candidates.

## GROUND RULES FOR THE AUDIENCE

1. Be respectful.
2. Please do not interrupt candidates' responses by clapping or voicing approval/disapproval of their comments.
3. We invite you to write down candidate questions on the note cards distributed by our ushers. Time constraints prevent us from hearing candidate answers today. However, we will submit audience questions to the candidates and provide their answers through social media. You can turn your cards into any usher or place them in the basket at our "Cookies with Candidates" reception following our program.





Monthly Board Meetings • 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays • 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

### NOAH Member Organizations

1. Alameda Christian Church (DOC)
2. American Baptist College
3. American Muslim Advisory Council
4. Anawim Community of Catholics
5. Beech Creek Baptist Church
6. Belmont UMC
7. Central Labor Council
8. Christ Church Cathedral (Episcopal)
9. Clark Memorial UMC
10. Communication Workers of America (CWA)
11. Community Relations Committee (CRC) of the Jewish Federation
12. Congregation Micah
13. Downtown Presbyterian Church
14. Eastwood Christian Church (DOC)
15. Edgehill UMC
16. Episcopal Diocese Beloved Community Commission
17. Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Church
18. First UU Church
19. Friends of Friend Ministry
20. Glenciff United Methodist Church
21. Glendale Baptist Church
22. Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church
23. Greater Bethel AME Church
24. Greater Nashville UU Church
25. Hobson United Methodist Church
26. Howard Congregational Church (UCC)
27. Interdenominational Ministers Fellowship
28. IUPAT (International Union of Painters and Allied Trades) DC 91
29. The Islamic Center of Nashville
30. Jefferson St. Missionary Baptist Church
31. Kairos-Ebenezer AME Church
32. Laborers International Union of North America – Local 386
33. Lee Chapel AME Church
34. Masjid-Al-Islam
35. Meharry Medical College
36. Metro Nashville Education Association (MNEA)
37. Metropolitan Interdenominational Church
38. Middle TN Jobs with Justice
39. Mt. Pisgah UMC
40. Muslim American Cultural Association
41. Naaman's Retreat Ministries
42. Napier-Looby Bar Association
43. Nashville District AME Church
44. New Covenant Christian Church (DOC)
45. New Living Word Community of Faith
46. Open Table Nashville
47. Opportunity Nashville
48. Payne Chapel AME Church
49. Riverside Seventh Day Adventist Church
50. St. Ann's Episcopal Church
51. St. Augustine's Episcopal Chapel
52. St. Bartolomew's Episcopal Church
53. St. John AME Church
54. St. Luke AME Church
55. St. Paul AME Church
56. St. Vincent de Paul Church
57. Second Presbyterian Church
58. SEIU Local 205
59. Southeast Center for Cooperative Development
60. Spruce Street Baptist Church
61. The Anchor Fellowship
62. The Temple (Congregation Ohabai Sholom)
63. Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council
64. Tennessee Alliance for Progress (TAP)
65. The Village Church
66. West End Synagogue
67. West End UMC
68. West Nashville Dream Center
69. Word of Life Christian Center International

**UMC:** United Methodist Church • **AME:** African Methodist Episcopal • **DOC:** Disciples of Christ • **UCC:** United Church of Christ • **UU:** Unitarian Universalist